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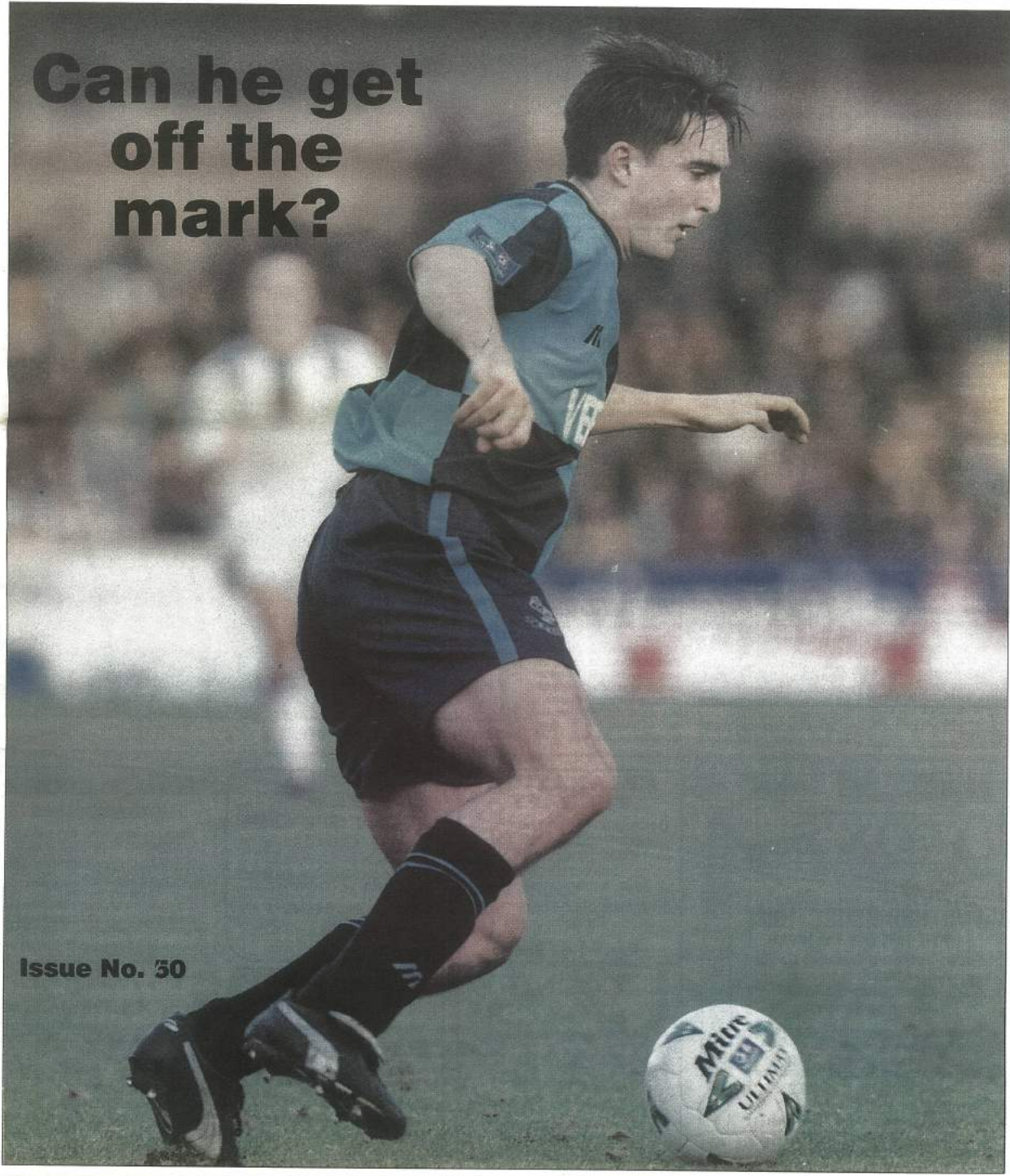


The **BLUES NEWS**

The official newspaper of Wycombe Wanderers Football Club

**Can he get
off the
mark?**

Issue No. 50



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Pictures for this edition of The Blues News were supplied by the Bucks Free Press.

The Blues News is the official newspaper of Wycombe Wanderers. It is produced in association with the Bucks Free Press. Any correspondence should be sent to the Editor, The Blues News, Wycombe Wanderers Football Club, Hillbottom Road, Sande, High Wycombe. Telephone (0494) 472100. Fax (0494) 527833.

Blues News 50 today

TODAY'S issue of Blues News is a landmark edition. This is the 50th issue of the official newspaper of Wycombe Wanderers, which was launched over four years ago in the Bucks Free Press. The cover picture on the first edition showed former Blues captain Terry Evans making a sliding tackle on Chris Sutton (then Norwich City) during Wycombe's FA Cup third round match at Adams Park.

Departure took us all by surprise

But Smillie says club should now look to the future

By Neil Smillie
Caretaker Manager

WELL what a week that was.

John Gregory's departure, taking him to the Premiership with Aston Villa, came as a shock to all at the club.

The speed of the events have left us all, not least myself, a little shell-shocked. The end of a frenetic week.

We all wish John the best of luck at Villa, and it was nice that both Villa and ourselves got a morale-boosting victory on Saturday.

So, we at Wycombe must look to the future and although John's work was unfinished, we must continue to strive to improve.

I have been in this position before with the club so will take nothing for granted, and get on with the job as though it is mine.

We have much to be proud of and must build on the work done by Martin O'Neill and John Gregory.

Certainly in my role as boss of the youth department, I'm very happy with the progress made in such a short time.

Mo Harkin and Alan Beeton have been our flag-bearers and they will inspire all the boys in the younger age groups.

The club is committed to its new youth policy, which

should tell all talented boys that Wycombe is the place to be.

Last year the community scheme was reinforced and Nas and Dave are working hard in the local schools, while also working to help Adrian Cole, our talent finder, to improve the standards all the time. Keep up the good work boys.

We also have some plans to improve training facilities for the youth scheme and community which will be very exciting if they work out.

The current professional players at the club have the rest of the season to impress me or whoever, and that must be their motivation in the coming weeks as we all know that things change quickly within football.

But the one thing the players can do is give 100 per cent effort and perform to their best. They can do no more.

Certainly within the game after the Bosman ruling the best players will be more sought after. The downside of many foreign imports is less places for our own talent, so players have every incentive to play well.



Neil Smillie: Temporarily in charge

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THE BLUES NEWS

5

Chairman explains new campaign

Boosting attendance

Dear Supporter,

In an effort to try and let everybody understand why we have been having several promotions recently, we are setting out the facts regarding the door to door canvassing and telemarketing.

Since January, Wanderers have run two promotions to try and boost attendances for the remainder of the season by attracting new supporters to Adams Park.

Firstly the club signed up with Granton Marketing last December who visited approximately 10,000 households in the High Wycombe area selling vouchers for our league matches and Pizza Express.

There was one voucher for each of our last 11 home matches. If anybody purchased these vouchers for £20 they could then buy one ticket and get one free of equal or lesser value.

The number of cards purchased was 1,000 and this is how they have been used at our home games: Wigan Athletic (12 vouchers), Blackpool (29), Brentford (63), and Burnley (58).

The figures for the Gillingham and York City matches were not available at the time of going to press.

Granton cannot sell anymore £20 vouchers without the club's prior written consent. It has no immediate plans to do this promotion again, as they can not be sure that the participants are all new supporters.

Secondly, the club signed up with a company called Tickets Direct to run a telemarketing campaign for the

By Ivor Beeks
WWFC chairman

Blackpool match on January 24 until the Chesterfield match on April 25.

A script was agreed to identify regular supporters, as the offer being made is aimed at first time WWFC supporters.

The essence of the offer is that persons who have not been to a match at Adams Park are being offered a free ticket on the condition they pay £13 for a seat in the ServisPak Stand upper tier.

For the Blackpool game 194 people accepted the offer, whereas for the Brentford match 250 people took it up, but only around 100 accepted for the Burnley match.

It is important to note that this offer is only available once and the Bristol City match is excluded. Those who come are followed up with a second offer.

If they pay £52 they get six £13 seats for the price of four.

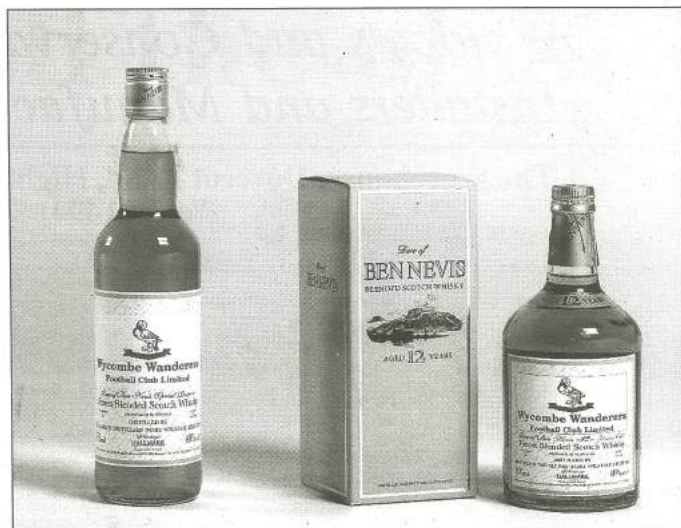
Again this offer is only available on a one-off basis.

The next offer is a season ticket at standard non-discounted prices. This telemarketing campaign has been far more successful than the club imagined.

It has recently agreed with Tickets Direct that the original offer of £13 will now be for two less central seats worth £11 each.

The club will be reviewing the success and any effects of this telemarketing campaign after the Chesterfield match.

We trust the aforementioned will enable you to understand why we have been forceful in our approach for the future.



Fancy a drop: The new Wycombe Wanderers whisky

Get on the case of Wanderers whisky

WYCOMBE Wanderers are offering their supporters their own branded Scotch whisky by the bottle or by the case on a mail-order basis.

Initially the club are offering a special reserve blend at £19.99 (all prices are plus VAT) and a 12-year-old deluxe blend at £26.99 (excluding carriage of £3.50 per bottle).

There is a 25 per cent discount if you order a case of 12, plus the carriage cost for a case which is £9.50, less than 80p per bottle.

A case of special reserve

blend costs just £179.91, whereas a case of the 12-year-old deluxe blend costs £242.91.

If you would like to see these bottles on display, they can be seen at both Wanderers in Town and in the Centre Spot Public House at Adams Park.

For enquiries after 6pm Monday to Saturday call (01494) 473689.

These Scotch whiskeys are distilled at the Ben Nevis Distillery in Fort William, Scotland, which is one of the few remaining independent distilleries in

Scotland today.

The special reserve blend and the 12-year-old deluxe blend have strengths of 40 per cent.

These products cannot be obtained in any shops in the UK and the Wycombe Wanderers label is exclusive to Wycombe Wanderers Football Club.

Order forms are available from Wanderers in Town in the Octagon Shopping Centre (opposite Littlewoods), the Centre Spot Public House, the Commercial Offices at Adams Park or alternatively by ringing (01494) 472100.

Carry on filling the net and we will fill the ground

BEFORE the Gillingham match Wycombe Wanderers had only lost one match at home out of our last 12 home league matches.

In fact up to two Saturday's ago we had won seven, drawn seven and lost two matches at home in the league since the start of the season.

Our average league attendance from last season was 5,223 whereas at present we are averaging nearer 5,500.

For our last eight home Division Two matches we have averaged just short of 6,000 per match which is a tremendous tribute to our supporters.

Hopefully with the Plymouth Argyle (March 14) and Bristol City (March 28) matches to come later in the month our average attendance for 1997/98 will be nearer our all time record at Adams Park of 5,856 for the 1994/95 season, which was set during our first season in Division Two.

Attendances are linked to a winning team. As the famous American football coach of Green Bay Packers, Vince Lombardi said: "Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing."

In the February edition of Sales and Marketing Management magazine Peter Lowe puts it plainly, saying: "Winners concentrate on winning. Losers concentrate on getting by."

At Wycombe Wanderers we all have a great desire to win, so we get pretty hurt if we ever lose.

In 1997 Wycombe only lost once in the league at Adams Park, which was a fantastic achievement. This season the division has been the tightest it's been since we joined it four years ago.

COMMERCIAL BREAK
by Mark Austin
Sales and Marketing Manager

With its excellent facilities and set up Wycombe Wanderers is geared up for Division One football, which we all hope will come sooner rather than later.

One thing is clear we will not be buying our way to success as the board of directors have decided not to spend more than we can afford.

Wanderers future is through the youth development department which is making excellent progress under the watchful eye of Neil Smillie and Adrian Cole.

Success is producing youth team players who can adapt to first team football on a consistent basis.

Certainly it has been good to see the growth of Mo Harkin and Alan Beeton, with Gary Wraight making his debut at Southend United.

Personally I'm delighted to see Keith Ryan sign a three year contract last month. It is good job security for Keith with his young family and it is nice to see him showing his loyalty to Wycombe Wanderers after the club stuck by him through his two knee injuries.

My next job will be persuading Keith's home and away Mark Your Man Sponsors, Link Precision Services also to sign up for the next three seasons.

Our match against Luton Town tomorrow at Kennilworth Road is yet another six pointer, so lets hope the lads can get the passion going and pull off a result.

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3	W2	12 Year Old Deluxe Blend (per single bottle)	£26.99		
4	W2	12 Year Old Deluxe Blend (per case x 12)	£242.91		

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THE BLUES NEWS

Blues are in safe hands with these two



Safe hands: Martin Taylor receives his award

WANDERERS keeper Martin Taylor has picked up the Player of the Month award for January.

Taylor, who has pulled off some magnificent saves for the Blues, is pictured above being presented with his award by official club sponsors Verco's Allan

Davies and Derek Vere.

Martin's Mark Your Man sponsors are George and Matthew MacKenzie (h) and Coach No.1 the Official Blues Supporters Club (a), who also took part in the photo presentation.

● The Youth Team Player of the Month

award went to Matt Hodson.

Hodson picked up his award, sponsored by Lucozade Sport, from Chris Walters of the Walters Group, official youth team sponsors.

Matt is showing some real talent as goalkeeper in the youth team.



SUPPORTERS FAVOURITE: Steve McGavin receives the Supporters Player of the Month award for December from Verco's Derek Vere and his Mark Your Man sponsor Selina Perrin

Presentations prompt mixed reaction at Park

THERE were two special presentations on the Adams Park pitch recently.

The first saw Blues fan Elaine Cooper pick up a cheque for £1,000 from Michael Forsyth after becoming the latest Blues Instant scratchcard winner.

And as a result lottery agent Jim De Muynck, who sold the winning ticket, receives a £100 bonus.

If you would like to become an agent call Mike Phillips on (01494) 472100 for full details.

The second presentation was not quite as happy, as the Blues said goodbye to marketing man Tim Arnold who has gone to Hilton Hotels. His replacement is Claire Ramsden.



Goodbye: Tim Arnold gets a send off



Hello: Elaine Cooper welcomes windfall

THE BLUES NEWS

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Spotlight on the Adams Park kids

Life's not such a ball for those matchday boys



Having a ball: Being a ballboy is a heavy job but these boys are thrilled to do it

SINCE Wycombe Wanderers Football Club signed up estate agents the Jenkins Newman Partnership as official pitch sponsors earlier this season the ball boys have had their work cut out, particularly in the wet.

The 60 foot diameter Jenkins Newman Partnership centre circle pitch banner is not light, especially after it has been raining, so one requirement for ball boys is that they have to be strong.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF ... The ballboys

They also need to be tall to put up the two goal banners that fill the goals before kick-off.

They have to put out the banner again at half-time.

Wycombe Wanderers is very proud of its ball boys who are looked after by Mike Clark on matchdays.

If you would like to go on the waiting list to be a Jenkins Newman Partnership ball boy, please write into the club stating your age, height, weight and confirming that you will be able to make yourself available for all Wycombe Wanderers first team home matches.

The good news is that you do get free entry to all Wycombe Wanderers friendly, league and cup matches!

Meeting the new kids on the block

YOUTH NEWS By Adrian Cole

BEFORE the Burnley game, we had the pleasure of signing two local boys as Associate Schoolboys.

Seen here on the day with Alan Parry, Neil Smillie and myself are Lewis Cook, his mother and Jonathan Dixon.

Lewis is a pupil at Sir William Ramsay School in Hazlemere and also plays for Wycombe District and Bucks county team, while Jonathan is from Slough District and represents Berkshire.

Both boys play regularly in Wycombe Wanderers Centre of Excellence U14s against other professional clubs. We wish them all the best and hope this is the start of a promising career with Wycombe Wanderers.



Bright hopes: Adrian Cole meets his new recruits but there is a long way to go yet on the rocky road to stardom



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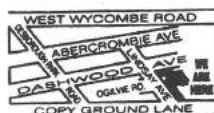
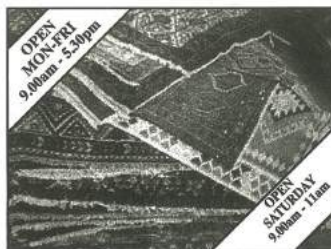
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THE BLUES NEWS

11

Who ate all the pies?

WYCOMBE Wanderers have won praise in a survey which shows that while the football at Adams Park may be of the Second Division variety, the pies are definitely Premier League standard!

Food experts visited all 92 clubs in the Premier and Football Leagues to assess the quality of the grub they have on offer to fans. In a no-holds-barred report they rated Wycombe as the 19th best ground in the country to fill your stomach.

It is further proof of the professional way the club handles catering. Food and beverage manager Tony Leese and his assistant Mark Rawlings have done a marvellous job and deserve praise. Under the eye of Alain Thibault, the director with responsibility for our catering division, we have earned a reputation for setting high standards.

Our chef, Steve and his team turn out vast quantities of top quality food every week. Of course, the survey was all about the food on offer on matchdays, but our catering output is much greater than that.

As one of the leading venue in the High Wycombe area for weddings, private functions, business meetings etc, Adams Park is busy every day and is a vital part of the club's financial health.

Football will always be our main business but home games take place once a

By Alan Parry

fortnight. We have to put Adams Park to use on the days in between. The income Wanderers derive from gates is not sufficient to pay the wages of our playing and coaching staffs.

I would urge supporters to use our facilities whenever the need arises. Next time your family is celebrating a wedding, birthday or lottery win give us a ring - you'll be pleasantly surprised at how competitive our costs are compared to other venues.

In addition, if you run a local business and you're looking to hold a conference, seminar or meeting, look no further. Adams Park can provide everything from a room for 300 people for a five course meal to a luxurious setting for coffee and biscuits for half a dozen associates. Even our boardroom can be hired.

I know you'd expect me to fly the flag, but I can honestly say the catering at Adams Park is better than I've ever experienced at any ground in the country. The beauty is that every penny your family or company spends at Adams Park goes towards improving the team.

I've never found the answer to the popular question "who ate all the pies?" But I do know this - if they ate them at Adams Park, they'll be well satisfied!



Cheque mate: John Hughes gives Dave Evans £2,000 for coaching local youngsters

Evans above, it's a big Wanderers windfall

WYCOMBE Wanderers Community officer Dave Evans was smiling all the way to the bank when he received a cheque for £2,000 from John Hughes of

the Midland Bank's High Wycombe High Street branch.

And under the Sportsmatch scheme, Sportsmatch have agreed to double the

money giving Wanderers a grand total of £4,000 towards their schools coaching project for youngsters in the local and surrounding area.

Chelsea's loyal fans are in for a Ruud awakening

OFFICIAL LINES
By Keith Blagbrough of Blues
Official Supporters Club

IN the week leading up to writing this there were a couple of announcements made by Chelsea, the obvious one regarding the departure of Ruud Gullitt the other one being the price of season tickets for next year.

Now, if Mr Gullitt cannot live on an annual salary of £1.2 million net, plus a house provided and a car, he has my deepest sympathy. And if Mr Bates chooses not to pay him a lot more money, again after tax plus all the perks, that is up to them to sort out between them and good luck to them.

What is more disturbing to me is the 40 per cent increase in season ticket prices to the fans. Making the prices start at £545 and rising to £1,250 for a seat.

What message is this giving to their loyal supporters - pay up and if you haven't got the money say goodbye.

In a previous issue I argued that this type of approach was designed to drive away the real fans from the game and in the long run would have a disastrous and ruining effect on the game.

As an example I mentioned that to see Manchester United play at Old Trafford, my son had applied before last July for an executive package because that is the only way you can see them play - ordinary tickets are long gone.

They then tell you which match you

can attend, and you have to take it or leave it. So having been allocated a match and booked the hotel, what happens next - Sky switch the match to a Friday and all the hotel bookings have to change. What happens then, they change the kick off time.

Between them the big clubs and the television companies are driving traditional supporters away.

It will not be long before digital television arrives with hundreds of channels. Every Premier fixture will be televised. How many people will pay £1,250 for a seat then? They won't need to, so maybe in the end sanity will prevail and perhaps clubs will realise that the real supporters, and not just the rich ones matter.

Some of our members may have missed the marketing announcement that the discount for members of the association at the club shops has increased from five per cent to ten per cent on production of your membership card.

This comes into operation immediately and is another good reason for joining us as well as the £3 discount on your coach tickets.

The Blues Supporters Club run coaches to all away matches providing a value added service with hot drinks and maps of the area around the ground for supporters convenience.

Make your bookings with Rena in the foyer of the Vere Suite before and after home matches or by telephone on (01296) 429307.

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THE BLUES NEWS

13

We're in a better position now

AS we enter the final third of the season we are better placed than at the same stage last term.

Before a ball was kicked I looked at the teams in this division, the new signings they had made and how much money certain clubs had spent.

Based on this knowledge I predicted we would finish either tenth or 12th in the table.

Considering our small squad and cash restrictions this would be a big improvement on last season.

It may take three or four seasons to gain promotion but as long as it is done sensibly we will arrive.

Last month I mentioned Crewe struggling to climb from the bottom half of Division One.

During February they have done just that with Dario Gradi in line for manager of the month award.

Our travels this month begin at Kenilworth Road, Luton on Saturday, March 7.

Luton were one of my tips for the top six this time and so it is hard to imagine they could be relegated. The point from the game over there last season was mega and in some respects unexpected.

This time we will be going to Luton expecting to take a point at least.

Another of the sides who like to play football, and this should give us a chance of getting a result, are Plymouth Argyle who visit Adams Park on Saturday, March 14 and we certainly owe them one.

A very dubious penalty,

A LOOK AHEAD by Alan Hutchinson

another goal yards offside and a crazy booking for Dave Carroll epitomised a poor Tuesday evening in November. This is a match where the team will not need to be wound up and I expect us to take all three points.

The following week, Saturday, March 21 we are off again this time to Wrexham.

We played really well there last season and came away with nothing and we are still looking for our first win at the Racecourse Ground.

With just two defeats for Wrexham at home this season, it will be a very hard game.

If Bryan Flynn and Joey Jones could get their team playing as well away, Wrexham would be in the next division.

The last game of the month on Saturday, March 28 is poised to be the game of the season.

Bristol City, with Mickey Bell, would be a scalp indeed. They have slipped albeit recently but remain favourites for promotion. Every time Watford have faltered City have not been able to capitalise as they have lost themselves. But the atmosphere will be electric for this game.

During 1998 our fans have been terrific at home, the noise levels have been raised and the team have responded.

City will not be relishing this game, memories of the 2-0 defeat here last season will linger. So bring on Bristol City, Mickey Bell and all, a game not to be missed.



Familiar face: Mickey Bell will come up against the Blues this month

Get your hands on these offers

BLUES fans purchasing tickets on the day of the Bristol City match (March 28) must produce a ticket stub from a previous Wycombe Wanderers match from this season or one of the blue or yellow vouchers which were handed out in October.

Wanderers supporters can purchase their tickets prior to matchday without any ticket stub as normal from Wanderers in Town in the Octagon, the commercial offices at Adams Park or on the Credit Card Hotline on (01494) 441118.

Wanderers hold their first Mufti Day at Adams Park on Good Friday when they

meet Grimsby Town. The match coincides with the last Quid-a-Kid day of the season and U16's wearing a home replica Vero shirt will get in free. Kids must buy tickets in advance whether on the day or before for £1. On entry through the turnstiles they will be given £1.

This offer includes all shirt-wearing junior season ticket holders. Youngsters on the AXA Equity & Law terrace do not have to pre-buy their tickets and will be admitted free at the gate.

When Wanderers entertain Plymouth on Saturday, March 14 the club is holding a Season Ticket Holders

Day.

Season ticket holders will be entitled to buy one match ticket and get one free of equal or lesser value by producing Voucher P from their season ticket books before matchday.

Season ticket holders will go into a draw to win an executive box for 12 on April 25, guest hospitality for Bristol City, a mascot package and signed shirt.

The club has doubled its clubshop discount for season ticket holders to ten per cent and all season ticket holders will get a free copy of the £1.50 Quarterman, the new quarterly magazine.

IN SHORT

Spring sale

THE Chairboys are holding a Spring Sale and Programme Fair in the Vere Suite at Adams Park on Sunday, March 29.

Mizuno away replica shirts are down in price to £9.99 childrens or £14.99 adults. There is also up to 75 per cent off white and sky replica socks and the 32 panel Wycombe Wanderers footballs are half price.

In addition there are massive reductions on the jigsaw goalie replica shirts, leisure wear and souvenirs.

And on the programme front top dealers from around the country will be selling old, rare and modern programmes.

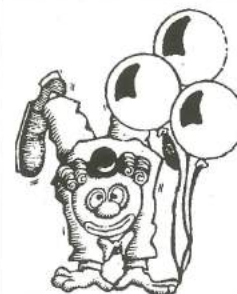
Doors open at 10.30am.

Good bus-iness

THIS year's Wycombe Bus Company annual charity away day to the Southend game raised £84.

Wycombe Hospital Radio received this money as it is locally based, entirely run by volunteers and not only provides much pleasure to those suffering in hospital but also has links with Wycombe Wanderers through its home match commentaries which are also available at Adams Park to visually impaired supporters.

Malcolm Hyland, who volunteered to drive the bus, presented the cheque to a representative of Wycombe Hospital Radio, before the match against Brentford.



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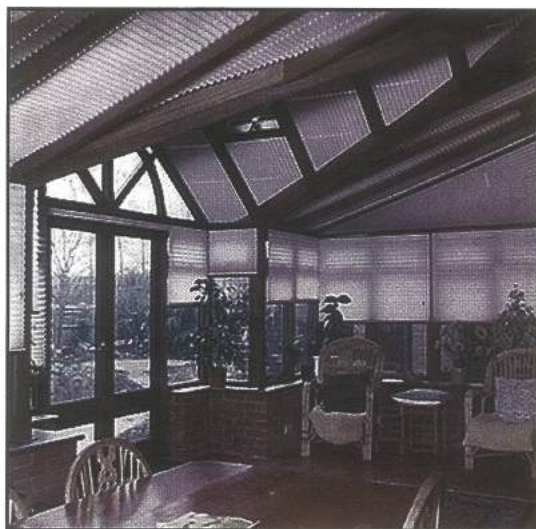
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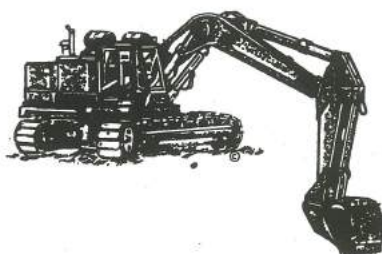
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Juniors & Students	£12	£11
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All tickets purchased prior to the match day for £1 will be refunded on entrance when wearing a W.W.F.C. home team shirt.

Offers applies to one home game for children under 16:

Friday 10th April
Wycombe v Grimsby
3pm Kick-Off

To book call in at Wanderers In Town or Adams Park Commercial Offices or call the Ticket Hotline.

01494 441118